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LORD FALKLAND'S GOVERNMENT.

THE SPEAKER (the Hon. Joseph Howe) spoke as follows :—Mr. Chairman, as some misunderstanding appears to exist with regard to the principles and objects of the present Administration—as reflections have been cast upon it on several occasions when I was in the Chair—and as one gentleman, in this Debate, has insinuated that the Government expects from the Members of this House a cringing support, while another has declared, that, though his head be grey, he hopes to see the Country return to its old Constitution, it would appear desirable that the principles and conduct of Lord Falkland's Administration should be frankly explained to the House and to the Country. On the first day of the Session the Hon. Member from Yarmouth complained that the policy of the Government was not more distinctly indicated by His Excellency : that Hon. Gentleman, or any other, has a right to call for the most ample explanations of His Lordship's principles, but these are not to be expected in the opening Speech. Our Institutions differ, in this respect, from those of our republican neighbours. The Government of the United States is not represented in the two Houses of Legislation by those who are the advisers of the Chief Magistrate, and therefore elaborate statements are made in the Messages sent down to Congress. In the British Parliament, the Crown is represented by its Ministers, who not only preside over important departments, but take the lead in the business of legislation ; and therefore the opening speech is regarded as a matter of form, and a party struggle rarely takes place upon it, except, under peculiar circumstances, where, (as in a late instance,) it may be necessary to give the coup de grace to a retiring Government, worsted by protracted and successful opposition. Though His Excellency, then, may not have gone at large into the general views upon which his Administration has been conducted, we, who stand here to represent him, are prepared to answer any questions which gentlemen may put, and to give the most ample information. Waiting for such inquiries, I have not thought it necessary to trouble

the House with a speech, but, when a gentleman rises and states his anxiety to go back to the old practices and modes of administration, which both the past House and the present House have repudiated, it is time to furnish explanations and statements of the conduct and policy of the Government, that Members may determine whether they will go on with the Administration or go back with the Member for Pictou.

I need not now refer to those circumstances which led to the formation of the present Government—these were fully explained at the last Session; and, by the rejection of an attempt to condemn us, the House seemed, by an overwhelming majority, to sanction the course which had been pursued: we have therefore gone on for a year, and now gladly return to the assembled Representatives of the people, to give an account of our stewardship, and to subject every principle and act of administration to the most searching and rigid inquiry. Lord Falkland's Government, like any other based on a Representative system, must be judged by its acts of *legislation* and of *administration*: let us then first enquire, how has it discharged its legislative duties? During the last Session the Government measures introduced were, the Halifax Incorporation Act, three or four Bills, for adopting, into our Criminal Code, the modern improvements of the Mother Country—the Act for abolishing the Inferior Courts and establishing the Judicatory of the Province, and the Act for improving the Court of Marriage and Divorce. All these were passed by both Branches, and, so far, was the legislative action of the Government approved. It is true that one Bill, introduced by Members of Council this Session, has been rejected, or rather deferred to the next Session, but all hostility, in that instance, has been denied by most of the majority who postponed the consideration of the Bill. Three or four Bills, introduced by Government this Session, have passed—some of them praised—but one has been postponed, while every measure of the last Session met the approval of both Houses;—it is evident, then, that if the Hon. Member from Pictou desires to go back, it cannot be because the legislation of the present Government has been hostile to the interests of the people, or contrary to the opinions of this House.

Passing to the second branch of the subject, the administrative duties, I may remark, that these are of a multifarious character, involving much responsibility and difficulty, particularly in a Government constituted like the present. These duties consist, chiefly, in paying suitable respect to the wishes of the people, as expressed through the ordinary channels, and dispensing the patronage of the Country. Before touching upon the mode in which the latter has been distributed, I may be permitted to say, in reference to the former, that the humblest individual in Nova Scotia, who, during the past year, has had any thing to bring to the notice of the Executive, has experienced due respect, and met a fair consideration of his claims. In every matter pressed by this House on the attention of the Government, the greatest anxiety has been manifested to meet its just expectations, and carry forward its plans. In this spirit the Boards

of Agriculture and Education, authorised by Acts of the last Session, were framed--the appointments might not be the best, but they were made with an anxiety to do what was right to the whole population, and to meet the wishes of this Assembly. The grant to the Museum, sanctioned by the Legislature, was withheld, lest a false step might be taken, and of that act this House has already approved. With the single exception of the Resolution for paying off £5000 of the funded debt, I know of nothing brought to the notice of the Executive which has not received attention : whether, in that matter, blame can fairly attach, remains to be shown--the question has not been raised.

In turning to the appointments by which the Executive must be mainly judged, I may be permitted to remark, to Members who, in debate, have expressed dislike to a coalition Administration, and who see anomalies in carrying on the Government by a junction of two parties, that they may be assured that none have felt the inconvenience of the position more than those who were at the Council Board ; they have found the fact continually pressed on their minds, and the deliberations of the present hour constantly influenced by the ties, obligations, passions, and prejudices of the past. To throw ourselves upon one party, and outrage the feelings of another, would have been a comparatively simple course, but we have chosen a more difficult task : one which, however it may for a time weaken the Government in some respects, will ultimately secure for it a broad foundation in the confidence of this House and in the affections of the people. To do justice to all--to surround the Governor with the best talent in the Province--to elevate to posts of importance men of experience and ability only, who were entitled to public confidence--and to break down those barriers of social and political exclusiveness, by which large classes of the community were shut out from the favor of, and driven into opposition to, the Government, has been our aim : this is the key to the dispensation of patronage--the leading principle running through all the appointments made since the arrival of Lord Falkland. Whether this course be right or wrong is for this Assembly to decide ; but I may be allowed to express my belief, that, in discharging this portion of his duties, His Lordship has been guided by a sincere desire to give satisfaction and to do justice. The first appointment of any consequence was that of the Hon. Mr. Bell, to a seat in the Legislative Council. I am aware that some Members think, and I entirely agree with them, that the rural districts are not yet sufficiently represented in that branch--but Mr. Bell had been twice returned to this House by the electors of the capital, and the appointment was an indication, to a large part of the Assembly and of the population, who had been hitherto too much excluded, that the Government was anxious to do what was right, and extend fair consideration to all. The next appointment was that of the present Master of the Rolls, and I think I may challenge any man to say, if, in selecting to preside over the Chancery Court, a gentleman who had long held the highest Crown Office, and who had sat at the head

of this House for nearly twenty years, the Governor did not do that which public opinion approved. In referring to the appointment of the Attorney General, I need not say to the House, and to the Province, that the gentleman selected stood at the head of the Bar, distinguished for talents, and eloquence, and qualities of various kinds; and although, in the discussions of former times, that gentleman sometimes was opposed to a majority of the Assembly, yet, from his weight of character, no man in the House will say that the Executive could have passed him over. The Solicitor General's was another of the new appointments, and his claims, also, were of a nature which could not be overlooked. The House had, for many years, borne testimony to his talents, information, and eloquence, and knew the value which any Government should place on his services. The appointment of Provincial Secretary, for the time being, was another act of the Executive. The selection of the gentleman who performs the duty, and who preserved the confidence of all parties in this Assembly for a series of years, formed an evidence of the anxiety of His Excellency to surround himself with men of ability and experience, and gave to the House an assurance of just and equitable government. The elevation of Mr. Justice Haliburton to the Bench of the Supreme Court, was another of the more important appointments. To this some of my own friends have objected, because, it was said, the gentleman belonged prominently to the other side. In making this appointment, so far as politics were concerned, the House had tied up the hands of the Executive, by making it compulsory to select one of the Judges of the Inferior Court, and all of them had acted with the former Administration. I do not wish to draw invidious distinctions, or to contend that the gentleman selected was the best fitted for the situation, I am but giving the answer to some of my own friends, by whom political objections have been raised. Looking to other appointments, one was made to the Customs at Windsor, with the approbation of the late Member, although the politics of the gentleman and his own were not the same. A similar appointment at Digby was complained of on a former day, and a few words of explanation may be necessary upon that point. There had been in this Province a party Government, one side being in, and the other carefully excluded, for a series of years. It became necessary, at the commencement of the new Administration, to convince the party excluded, and whose good wishes it was wise to conciliate, that the middle wall of partition was broken down, that men of all parties were eligible to appointments under the Government, and that the path was open for all to aspire to and share the patronage of the Province. The appointment showed, to a large portion of the people, that Government sought active useful men, and that politics were hereafter to form no ground of exclusion from office. I need not repeat the reasons given on a former evening in justification of the employment of Mr. Wightman.

Turning to the Executive Council—may I not claim for the Lieutenant Governor the most anxious desire to remedy, what, on his

assuming the Government, was felt to be the main fault in its construction. A seat was offered to the Hon. Member from Yarmouth, who, I have always regretted, felt himself constrained, by strong opinions on a particular measure, and strong feelings towards particular individuals, to decline it. But his Lordship did not stop there: the recent appointment of the learned Member for Inverness, must have shown to the Members of the old majority, that there is no desire to retain old feelings and antipathies among the Members of the present Government, but that the wish is to act for the general satisfaction and benefit of the Province at large. Let me now glance over the small but necessary appointments which pervade the Country. Many of these yield little or no emolument—but they confer honor and influence in the different Counties, and they may be made in a way either to wound the feelings of large classes of the people, or to convince the population that they have been distributed by a just and paternal Government. In dwelling for a moment on this branch of the duties of the Executive, I think I may declare at the outset, that no new Administration, coming into office with new principles, ever dealt more leniently with those holding high official or subordinate situations, than did the Government of Lord Falkland. Of all those who had been crowded into every post and commission during a party Government of half a century—but four or five Magistrates, and these for particular reasons which need not be gone into now, have been displaced, in eighteen months, by the Lieutenant Governor. Whether this conduct were wise or unwise, looking merely to the ordinary modes of strengthening a new Administration, it ought to prove to the party whose friends have thus been left in possession, that there has been no desire to act harshly, but a generous determination to do what was right and conciliatory, even to those whose ancient monopoly had been broken up. With respect to appointments, the rights and duties of the Executive, and of the House, ought to be distinctly understood. In receiving from Members of the Legislature suggestions and information, with respect to appointments, the Government exercises but a just discretion. The utmost weight has been, and will ever be, given to the opinions of those who represent and live among the people; but it must always be borne in mind, that all these offices, as also the highest in the land, are in the gift of the Queen's Representative, and that the free exercise of the prerogative, even in the most remote settlement of the Colony committed to his care, in the distribution of patronage, as in the protection of the subject, is a duty which Lord Falkland is determined conscientiously to discharge. In seeking suggestions and information, from those whose opinions are best entitled to respect, the advisers of His Excellency have only done their duty to the Queen's Representative in the manner most likely to give satisfaction—they have never asked that the prerogative should be surrendered into their hands, much less into the hands of Members of this House. But they are here to defend its exercise—to shew that the Nobleman at the head of the Govern-

ment, while he has preserved the prerogative with a jealous and sensitive regard to the rights of the Crown—appointing and removing at pleasure—has used it with the utmost deference to the rights and feelings of the people. With these explanations, let me now answer the question, how has this power been exercised in the different Counties? We are bound to give an answer to this question in the House, because, although none have made sweeping charges here, they have been made elsewhere, and reiterated by the designing and malicious from one end of the Province to the other. Here, on the floors of this House, is the place where charges, either against a Government or any of its Members, should be made, if they can be made at all. Here, if a man tells an untruth, it can be probed, his subtleties torn to pieces, and he made ashamed, before the assembled Representatives of the people whom he seeks to mislead. Here a man can stand up and defend his conduct, and contend fairly for his principles, and though I may disregard the covert slanders which are hourly cast upon the Government, it gives me pleasure to stand here in its defence, because I know that its acts and its policy are defensible.

In seven Counties of the Province, Halifax, Cape-Breton, Queen's, Lunenburg, Sydney, Shelburne, and Inverness, every appointment throughout the year has been either made in accordance with the suggestions of the gentlemen who represent them, or in such a manner as I have reason to know meets their approval. This is a wide departure from the old system, a substantial concession from the Crown to the People: and yet the rights of the Crown are studiously guarded, for not one of those appointments would Lord Falkland have made, unless, in his deliberate judgment, he approved of the suggestions. Let me run over the other Counties, and see how matters stand. In Richmond every local appointment, but two, was made at the suggestion of the Members, and those two were recommended by the gentleman who formerly represented the County. In Hants and Colchester all that were asked were given, with others which were satisfactory. In Digby, where there has been a division of sentiment, the claims of both parties were respected. In Yarmouth some awkward mistakes occurred in the appointment of the School Commissioners, in which, perhaps, the Government were to blame; yet the error arose from no desire to annoy, but from the want of that minute local information, which, however desirable, cannot always be had in the capital. The Magistrates given to Yarmouth were approved, or, if there was any fault, more good ones were appointed than were asked or expected. In Cumberland two parties exist, the one represented here by two Members, and the other by one, yet the aim of the Government has been to do justice to both, to select men of influence and respectability from each, and to draw the population together by a course of conciliation and justice. Annapolis was a County peculiarly situated. One party, there, a small minority, had for a long time held dominant sway over the other, which embraced much of the wealth, intelligence, and productive industry of the County. Without, then, disturbing the minority in

the offices they enjoyed, the policy of Lord Falkland has been to do justice to the majority—to sweep away the old rule of exclusion, and to let every man within the County feel, that, if possessed of character and intelligence, he was entitled to fair consideration from the Government. Differences of opinion existed in Guysborough, and severe charges, backed by the Members from that County, were preferred against an individual there—an investigation was given, and the explanations being satisfactory, the prerogative, instead of being tamely surrendered, for purposes of oppression, was extended for the protection of an humble individual, against popular clamour, until a Jury of his countrymen should pronounce upon his guilt or innocence. Complaints have been made here respecting some appointments in King's County, but the Member of Council from that County, who was regularly summoned, not having attended, the Lieutenant-Governor is scarcely to blame for errors which might have been corrected had that Gentleman been at the Board. I am well aware that a good deal of dissatisfaction is felt by one party in Pictou, but the state of that County must be taken into account. The Pictou Academy has, for many years, been a source of discord in that part of the Province. The population are nearly all Presbyterians, divided by some lines of demarkation, which in the Old Country may be sufficiently distinct, but in this are scarcely discernable. As, however, the nearest of kin are often the most bitter opponents, so it has been with the good people of Pictou :—having had little to quarrel about, their enmity has been irreconcilable. The party represented by the Hon. Gentleman who complains of the Government, and his colleagues, we are bound to believe is the largest, from the fact of its influencing the representation,—but the other is nearly one half, composed of intelligent, industrious and valuable Novascotians ; and could the enlightened Nobleman at the head of the Government surrender the Queen's prerogative to the Hon. Gentleman and his friends, that a body like this should be trodden down by its religious, rather than its political, opponents ? In distributing local patronage, justice and every courteous consideration have been given to the party who are represented here, but the minority has had justice also. In exercising the prerogative firmly, the feelings of one party may have been excited into undeserved hostility ; but His Excellency would be unworthy to preside over the Province, and the Members of his Government would be unworthy to stand in this House, as his advisers, if, knowing the numbers, property and intelligence, of that body, they allowed their opponents to ride over them, rough shod, without any attempt made for their protection. This is the answer to the Hon. Member from Pictou.

In this manner, then, has the Government of Lord Falkland been conducted: whenever His Lordship has interfered to guide the Legislation of this House, it has been his aim to extend popular rights—improve the criminal laws—renovate, or consolidate, existing institutions, and supply such machinery as may be required for an effective and responsible Administration ; when he has been called on to

dispense either general or local patronage, his aim has been to correct past errors, to allay old animosities, to call men of ability into the service of the Country, and to make every man of worth and talent feel that he has but to command the confidence of the people, to attract the notice of the Government. To make this intelligible to the Country, in the short space of a year, has required much labour, and patient consideration. The Government of this Province differs in some important particulars from that of Canada: there the Administration is composed of Heads of Departments, each Member drawing a large Salary. Only two Members of Lord Falkland's Council receive any emoluments,—so that, if every trifling detail of Administration has not been as perfect as might be desired, the labours of those gentlemen have not as yet brought much reward, although they have spent many anxious hours in the public service.

Charges have been made, and reiterated from time to time, against myself, of which I have taken little notice, but to which it may be as well now to give the answer. It has been said that, by the exercise of undue influence, the patronage of the Government has flowed into my family. I here state, in presence of this Committee, and of the Country, and I challenge denial from those who represent these slanderers, that Lord Falkland has never given patronage, to the amount of a single pound, to myself or to any of my family, since he assumed the Government. My Father enjoyed an office many years ago, and, according to the good old rule of inheritance, his Son succeeded, and has held the appointment since his death. The present Deputy Post Master General has given subordinate offices, of which he possessed the patronage, under the sanction of the Post Master General in England, to members of his family. These have been bestowed independent of the Administration,—one of them under the Government of Sir Colin Campbell. During the last year, one of these situations, after having been twice offered to young gentlemen of the town, and refused, was given to a member of my Brother's family, who held a place under Government, nearly as good as that which he accepted in the Post Office Department, and which he immediately resigned. This is my answer to my personal assailants, and let any man here contradict my assertions if they are not correct. But, it may be said, if the Howes do not get every thing, the McNabs do. A few words of explanation will set this matter right. The seat enjoyed by one of the McNabs, in the other end of the Building, was given by Sir Peregrine Maitland,—and the seat in the Executive Council, by Sir Colin Campbell.

Mr. Huntingdon said a trifling error had been made on that point, the appointment alluded to was by Sir Colin Campbell, but it was not confirmed until subsequently.

Hon. Mr. McNab.—The Mandamus was out before Lord Falkland's arrival.

The Speaker.—The Mandamus was received in the Province while the Governor General was on his visit to New-Brunswick, and

Mr. McNab was sworn in, by Sir Colin, before he returned; on the arrival of Lord Falkland, he stood in the same situation as other Members; and, being elected by the people, could not have been fairly displaced. So far, then, it is clear that Lord Falkland cannot be charged with these appointments, or with having done any thing, by my advice, for the special benefit of the Howes and McNabs. I have been long enough in public life to know that falsehoods may circulate through society, as the hidden thorn festers in the flesh, the answer and the remedy being easy, when the cause of the irritation can be traced. In this House I am always ready to meet misrepresentations—to grapple with falsehoods, and put them down by the force of truth and candid dealing. I make these explanations here, because here are gentlemen from every part of the country, who can contradict me if they are untrue. Lord Falkland has given a young friend of mine an honorary situation on his personal staff, which yields neither emolument nor influence, but leads to some expense. The situation of Provincial Aid is a household, not a political, appointment, and is generally given to genteel good-looking young men, of respectable families in the Town. Though well aware that it would be unfair, to his Lordship, to attempt a defence of such an appointment here, I may say thus much for my young relative, that he has had a liberal education, has manifested as much judgment and industry as his neighbours, and has travelled over more of Europe and America than half of those who are snarling at his heels.

Having thus disposed of the misrepresentations aimed at myself personally—which I know have made but little impression in this Assembly, where the facts are known, but which have been industriously circulated elsewhere; let me now invite your attention to the objections urged against the Government, not for its acts, but on account of its composition. It has been said by many, We have no specific complaint to urge—we approve of the general principles announced by the Administration—its appointments are satisfactory, but we dislike it because it is a coalition. I think I may say, with all sincerity, that if gentlemen out of the Government have felt any difficulties pressing upon them from this circumstance, those within have had their share. I believe I express but the common feeling of my colleagues, when I acknowledge that the old party ties, and feelings, and perhaps prejudices, which beset our path at the outset, and which are now felt to offer almost the only obstruction to the harmonious and satisfactory action of the Government, have added materially to the obstacles with which we have had to contend. I had read of coalitions, but, until recently, knew but little of their peculiarities, or of the varied passions and suspicions they are calculated to arouse; now, when I take up a volume of English History, I can enter into the spirit of such times most intimately, and can understand how new combinations of parties are attended with many difficulties, trying to the minds, and absorbing the feelings, of those by whom they are formed—and who, though they may be looking with a single eye to

the public interest, and yielding to the pressure of circumstances which cannot be controlled, must yet bear, for a time, the annoyances incident to connexions that success may finally justify, but which are never forgiven should they fail. If, then, some of my old friends, and the friends of my colleagues, have been displeased with the anomalies presented by the coalition, we have felt them at every step. But a coalition, particularly in a new Country like this, has its advantages as well as its evils; and, as the House seemed to think so, and as it sanctioned the connexion, after a full explanation of the circumstances under which it was formed, we have felt bound to go on, giving to Lord Falkland our best assistance, whatever might be the sacrifices which public duty called on us occasionally to make of our personal feelings. It is not my intention to go again into the question of whether it was wise or necessary to form the coalition: I wish only to show that, being formed, it has acted fairly and honorably towards those to whom it appealed for support. It has been said that we hold our places on sufferance—this is true, but the same may be said of any Administration. In England a Government has no lease for a term of years—it holds on until the opposition are strong enough to displace it, and until a combination of able men, acting upon antagonist principles, are prepared to take possession: our duty to each other, and to the Nobleman at the head of the Government, compels us to do the same—and it is to ascertain whether the opposition which has met us here, and which we have no desire to shrink from, has either the strength or the settled principles of action likely to embarrass us, that we now make explanations, and court discussion. Our anxious desire has been to forget the past, and to make the coalition, into which circumstances forced us, a source of benefit and advantage to the country. Our wish is, to reflect truly to this House, and to the Province at large, the enlightened views and principles upon which we are directed by Lord Falkland to conduct his Government: a man more sedulously devoted to the interests of this Country—possessed of a clearer head, and a better heart, and more deeply concerned in the success of the great experiment which the Mother Country is trying on this Continent, is not to be found in Nova-Scotia, even among those who drew their first breath on the soil. His Lordship is desirous to give to this House every power and privilege which the Commons, in a British Colony, having a Representative Constitution, ought to enjoy: but, at the same time, he is determined duly to guard the prerogative committed to his charge, and the wise application of which is one of the first duties of a statesman. The Government of the Country, then, is not one looking to particular interests and parties, but one which regards all the people as members of a great family, who should be drawn together by a system of conciliation and justice. There may be times when all that is desirable cannot be accomplished, but we have endeavoured to do the best we could under the difficult circumstances in which we were placed; and, notwithstanding the spirit of hostility evinced in certain quarters, I think I may safely appeal to the House, and ask if there are many

here who, upon reflection, disapprove of our principles, or of the mode in which the Government is now conducted. The Hon. Member from Pictou said that he did.

Mr. Holmes.—I proved the contrary. I supported the Government last Session, and assisted to keep it in its present position.

The Speaker.—I am glad of it. The Hon. Gentleman, then, only disapproves of certain acts, and, I hope, when he has heard our explanations, he will have little occasion to do even that. I think I may appeal to others, who formerly belonged to the same party, and ask whether they have not good cause to be satisfied—they have six gentlemen in the Government who formerly acted with them, while their opponents have but three. Looking to the mere numbers in the Executive Council, my old friends would appear to have the most cause of complaint, but I am prepared to shew that both have received justice at the hands of the Administration. The reason of this is clear : we all have acted, not upon any preconceived opinions which were entertained, or upon any party connexions which may have existed, but, on principles and views laid down by Lord Falkland for our guidance, and to which we are expected to adhere so long as we are connected with his Government. These may be taken to include the obligation, on our part, to preserve the confidence, and cordial co-operation, of the Legislature, and to do substantial justice to the great body of the People. The scope of my argument, then, with reference to appointments, is intended to show that this has been done. If the old administration party complain, I turn to the Counties of Lunenburg and Queens, whose Members formerly stood opposed to me, but who, representing, apparently, a united constituency, have had every deference paid to their recommendations and suggestions. No general rule can be applied to such matters, and it would be folly to pretend that errors may not have been committed ; but I claim for the Government ; that it shall be judged by its general course of conduct, and, in the main, I am satisfied that those who formerly acted with my learned friend from the County of Cape Breton, have no cause of complaint.

Turning to my own friends and supporters, I am prepared to show that the present Administration has evinced an anxious desire to win their confidence, not by the sacrifice of their former opponents, but by a fair and just consideration. In endeavouring to reconcile those who looked to a party government—in bearing up against the absurd opinion of some, that I could only be useful in opposition, I have had some trials of temper, but have been amply rewarded by the returning confidence of old friends, and the cordial union of the constitutional party, every where, in support of the present Government.

Mr. J. R. Dewolf.—Do you endeavour to satisfy them ?

The Speaker.—My object is to show that the Government has been such as ought to satisfy both parties. If any gentleman thinks that justice has not been done, he should state his charges to the House. It has been said, by some of my friends, the Reformers have but three Representatives at the Council Board : this is true, if the term is

confined to those who acted with the majority of the last House; but there are others who, on a great variety of questions, are as liberal as any—who are every way entitled to the respect of large bodies of the population, and whose wish is to do justice to all. The spirit of past conflicts is not heard in the deliberations of the Council, but the desire of its Members is to forget old feuds, and to make Lord Falkland's name the rallying point for the better feelings of the Country: in doing this, the policy and views of the Government must be regulated by the aspect of the whole Province, not by the prejudices, or unreasonable desires, of any particular County. If dissatisfaction has arisen, because Lord Falkland has had the firmness to disregard local importunity, and resist local faction, it will not be by the assembled Representatives of the whole Province that he will be condemned. Petitions have sometimes been sent, asking for appointments, on the ground that the Government was pledged to act according to the well understood wishes of the People: this is absurd, if the phrase is applied to a majority in any particular District or County; as understood, and acted on, by the present Administration, it means the well understood wishes of the Province at large—as represented in this House. With this the liberal party appear to be satisfied, and well they may be, when they look back and contrast their present position with what it was. Although their representation in the Government is limited, and although they may not have accomplished all that seems necessary for a complete party triumph, they have won all that the Country requires to ensure good government hereafter—British Representative Institutions, carrying with them Executive influence. Under the old system, twelve gentlemen, who, during a quarter of the year, discharged, in secret, the functions of a Branch of the Legislature, held during their lives a monopoly of Executive power; the Governor could not turn them out, neither could the People; they ruled both, and acknowledged responsibility to neither: very different is the position of Lord Falkland's Government, as every Member of it has avowed.

Mr. Harrington.—They avowed, last Session, that they would continue to support the minority if they were out of the Administration.

The Speaker.—If out of the Administration, gentlemen would probably act with old friends, or take any course they pleased—but while in it, they are bound by the principles upon which it is formed, and there is not a Member of Lord Falkland's Council who would not bow, constitutionally, and after the deliberate opinion of the country was fairly ascertained, to the decision of this House. That every fair attempt has been made to give the majority representation at the Board, is shown by the fact, that a seat was offered to my Hon. friend from Yarmouth, and that one has been conferred on my learned friend from Inverness; indeed the general conduct of the Administration has shewn that a rule of fairness has been substituted for the old one of exclusion: I may again refer to the different Counties in proof of that.

Mr. Huntingdon.—Satisfaction has not been given in Yarmouth

The Speaker.—I admitted before that some mistake had occurred in the School Commissions, although I believe the other appointments were satisfactory. In the recent Commissions of the Peace, nearly eighty liberal Magistrates were appointed, and an equal number were included in other County Commissions throughout the year: more than had been appointed for the last twenty years. But it might be said by each side of the House—if we had a strictly party government, we might have all: this is true, but one side only could have it. Whatever may be the evils of a coalition, it has this advantage—that, if generously sustained by the friends of those who form it, it can act fairly towards both. Under a party government, those in power must keep all the patronage to themselves, to strengthen their position. This is the natural course of things. It is clear, then, that under such circumstances, whatever one party gains the other must lose; while the Country, looking to it as a whole, without reference to party connexions, would not have so equal and fair an Administration, under either, as it has now. Serious doubts are entertained, whether either of the parties which formerly divided this Province could form and carry on a Government independent of the other. The old Administration party certainly could not, for they form the minority in this House and throughout the Country. The other party could try the experiment, and it might succeed, but, the moment it was attempted, able men, whose talents are now employed to conduct the Government in harmony with the wishes of the people, would be driven into opposition, and compelled, perhaps, to combine with those who hold more extreme opinions, to embarrass and obstruct rather than to accelerate the introduction of a rational system. As far as I am personally concerned, I am free to acknowledge, that, if either party were prepared to carry on the Government respectably, in defiance of the other—if there were, as there are in England, a sufficient number of able men in each to fill every important office, and if great public questions formed broad lines of division between them—it would be more congenial to my feelings to serve in such a Government, or in constitutional opposition to it, than in a coalition; but, situated as parties were when Lord Falkland came to this Country, as they are now, and probably will be for some years to come, my conscientious belief is—that the Province will derive more advantage from the combined action of able men, whose main grounds of difference have been swept away by the recent Colonial improvements, than it would by splitting them into factions on minor political points, or mere personal predilections.

In this opinion the House concurred last year, and I do not believe that there is any large party disposed to disturb the broad foundation upon which the present Government rests, or to throw the Country into confusion, merely for the purpose of testing or abusing the great powers which the present system includes: this Assembly understands its high duties too well,—but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there is, beyond these walls, an unreasoning, irreclaima-

ble faction, disposed to go the whole length with the Hon. Member from Pictou—to move the state coach back to the old road—to undo what the constitutional party has accomplished, and to make the name of the present Administration, and the principles upon which it is founded, disliked by the people of Nova-Scotia. I appeal to those who have hitherto acted with me, both here and elsewhere—to those who have been the tried friends of the Constitution and the Country, and ask, will they, upon any small pretext, for any trifling difference of opinion among themselves, play the enemy's game, and put it in their power to grope back to the old and exploded system? The constituency of Nova-Scotia will never consent to that. You might as soon persuade them to adopt the costume of their great grandfathers, or dress their wives in the hooped petticoats their grandmothers wore. Those Political Rip Van Wrinkles have been slumbering so long in the sleepy hollows of ultraism, that they seem scarcely conscious of what has been passing around them of late years, and fancy that they can get the people back to the old principles. If they do, it will be without the aid of any of those who are in the present Administration, and who are determined to move steadily on, upon the beaten paths of the Constitution, and to keep clear of the old slough of despond. Between the small faction, who wish to retrograde, and the present Government, there is a gulf, wide as the poles asunder. They cannot take my hon. and learned friend from Cape Breton, or myself, or any of the men who surround Lord Falkland, back, or prevent us from paying to the Assembly that deference and respect which the Representatives of the People have a right to claim from those who compose the Executive Council. These worthies put me in mind of the old woman in Edinburgh, who lived in one of the highest flats of one of the oldest mansions, and was, to her dying day, a zealous adherent of the Pretender. She mourned over the elevation of the House of Brunswick, and, after two or three of the line had sat on the Throne of the United Kingdom, she still toddled on, with pattens on feet, and a little dog by her side, denouncing the new principles,—and sighing for the good old times. She and the Stuarts have gone to their final account, but some of her lineal descendants must have emigrated to this Province, and mourn here, as she did at home, over improvements they cannot retard. There was an American projector, during the last war, who invented a machine, called a torpedo, which was to swim under water, and blow up the British Navy. It raised great expectations, but something always went wrong, and, except when the inventor blew himself up occasionally, no other mischief was done. A similar result generally attends the schemes of the small party to whom I refer—they plot below, and sometimes make a ripple on the surface, but rarely do any harm, except to themselves. They often remind me of an old verse of a nursery song, to the tune of Yankee Doodle :

Silas took a maple log, and filled it full of powder,
It made a crack like Father's gun, only little louder.

The opposition make noise enough in all conscience ; most of their heads being as sappy as maple logs, the explosion is often tremendous—but the aim is seldom true. If the friends of constitutional government, in this House and throughout the Country, act as they ought, against the unreasoning, unjust spirit, which these people exhibit, they will be altogether powerless, and can never hope to force back the Political Institutions of the Province to what they were five or six years ago. I put the question to the Members of this House—are you willing to give up the substantial power you now possess, and go back to the condition in which you were at the commencement of 1836 ? If you are, the People of Nova-Scotia will never go back with you, to become laughing stock to all British America.

Novascotians are regarded by their neighbours as public spirited, and well informed,—having political rights, and possessing loyalty not to be impaired by the free action of their Anglo Saxon spirits upon their own affairs, through Institutions analogous to those of their Mother Country. Ask such a People to go back to the wretched system of Administration which they have so recently, and so contemptuously, cast aside ! you might as well ask the River, whose broad expanse reflects the vault of Heaven, and on whose bosom Navies ride, to go back to the narrow gorges and pent up channels by which its head waters were confined. Ask the Author—who hangs over the last page of the volume which is to immortalize his name, to blot out each noble thought, and go back to the first line ; ask the Sculptor to dash to pieces the statue, born of his imagination, and fashioned by his hand, just as its limbs become instinct with majesty, and its features beam with expression ; but ask not my countrymen to give up the high privileges they have acquired, or go back to the soul-repressing, vexatious, and un-English system from which they have escaped.

These are the views I take of the present position of our affairs, and I give them here, that I may invite discussion, and ascertain from the Representative Branch whether the policy and principles of the present Government are, or are not, acceptable to the People. I am also desirous, that if any man has a complaint to make, or a charge to urge against the Government, it should meet us here—here where the advisers of the Lieutenant-Governor stand ready to answer—here where a Jury of fifty gentlemen, gathered from every section of the Province, sit to try its merits, and where neither a false accusation nor a lame defence can for a moment be sustained.

One complaint, sometimes made against Lord Falkland, deserves to be noticed, for its novelty—it is one not often urged either against the Sovereign or those who represent her in the Colonies : it has been said that his Lordship has been guilty of the high offence of surrounding himself with men of ability, and of endeavouring to combine in his Administration as much of talent and experience as he could get. This is certainly a strange ground of opposition. It is one rarely resorted to by public men in England. Sir Robert Peel never thought of bringing such a charge against the Whigs. The

complaint, in the late struggle, was not that they had too much talent, but that they had not enough.

Mr. J. R. Dewolf.—Would Sir Robert Peel take from the House of Commons all the talent of both parties, to form his Government?

The Speaker.—In the House of Commons there are always men enough to form two or three Cabinets—but even there, if circumstances compelled Sir Robert to form a coalition Administration, he would take the best men he could get; and if, in a Colony where the range of selection was limited, gentlemen who formerly differed upon abstract points of politics could be induced to combine for the common good, when those points were settled, he would run the risk of laying himself open to the charge of giving his confidence to men of talent. But, while the people get the benefit of the counsel which men of ability give to a Governor, do they run any risk from his being so surrounded? The Government of England, with its enormous patronage, extending through every ramification of diplomacy, of the Army, the Navy, and the Church, cannot purchase the Representative Branch, or prevent it from dismissing a Ministry that the people disapprove of; and, in this Province, I deny that the elevation of any eight or nine men, however eloquent or able, can stifle the public voice, or trammel the independent action of this Assembly—such an assertion is a slander on the Legislature, and on the People of Nova-Scotia. The events of the present winter have shown that this House will always pursue an independent course, irrespective of any Government. I knew before the House met that such a slander would be repudiated. On questions where the majority conscientiously differed with the Administration, they took their own course. The Members of Government thought they discovered feelings at work which were not avowed, but when convinced there was no hostility, but that the votes were given from opinions on the merits of the measures, they were content to go on in the course which they had chosen, feeling that the House had the spirit, and the power, to supply a corrective whenever the Government was wrong.

The forlorn hope of the faction to which I have alluded, is the change of Government in England—they, a contemptible minority of our population, think that the statesmen who claim their places because they are the leaders of the majority at Home, will violate their own principles, and those of common sense and sound colonial policy, for the purpose of bolstering up a fragment of a party here, who have neither the talent, the numbers nor the influence to conduct a Government, and who make a wretched opposition. These people forget that the new colonial system is not a party question in England. Whigs and Tories approved of Lord Durham's Report, and of Lord Sydenham's policy. The Canada Act received the cordial concurrence of Sir Robert Peel, as well as of Lord John Russell—the only important amendment moved giving power to the colonists to construct their own municipal councils: a concession which proves that the Conservative party in England has no desire to fetter us in the conduct of our domestic affairs. Both the great parties in England

are, then, pledged to the present system—pledged to give to British North America the rights of British subjects; the Sovereign, whose name has been solemnly used—the Parliament, before which every document has been laid, are pledged to it—and so are the People, who know no reason why the British Constitution, in all its strength and all its beauty, may not exist on one side of the Atlantic as well as on the other,—and who are weary of wasting millions to please the cliques by whom alone the old system is attempted to be upheld. Are those who sigh for the good old times mad enough to believe, because there is a change of parties, in England, upon a Corn Law or a Tithe question, that therefore every Colonial Governor is to be withdrawn, every Council dismissed, every Assembly defied? Perish the Nova Scotian who would uphold such a doctrine! The duties of the maternal government are high and important—but the local affairs of these Colonies are confided to Representative Assemblies, whose confidence is an essential element of the Executive Administration, and whose action, within certain defined limits, is equally essential. Ask Sir Robert Peel, who recently moved that memorable resolution, declaring that Parliament could not proceed to business until Her Majesty was surrounded by advisers who possessed its confidence, to blame Lord Falkland for calling round him men who possess yours, or for governing a British Province on British principles! Will he damage his reputation by violating the practice of the Constitution? And for what inducement? To re-establish the old Council of 12, who legislated with closed doors, and held Executive power for life—who governed Governors and People, without being responsible to either. The idea is ridiculous, and those who entertain it can know very little of the Premier or of his principles. When in England, some time ago, I heard men of all parties discuss Colonial questions,—and although there was a want of local information apparent at times, there was a spirit of justice and fairness, which argued well for the establishment of sound liberty in the Colonies, and the perpetuity of British connexion. There is no danger, then, of external influences marring the harmonious conduct of our domestic affairs. The people of this Province have acquired a new power over the Government—they know their rights, and the Nobleman, whose administration I am proud here to defend, knows how to respect them. The new Colonial system confers substantial advantages, and there is no disposition, either in England or in Canada, to abridge them. The true guards of rational liberty, sanctioned by centuries of experience, are treasured in the heads and hearts of our population,—and my belief is, that we have the cordial sanction of almost all the leading minds of England, to the temperate but firm exercise of them in the management of our domestic affairs. In conclusion let me observe, that those who opposed the former Administration came forward in open debate—affirmed principles or defeated measures, but never descended to personal attacks upon the Governor. That gallant old officer left the Province, feeling that he had been in a political battle, which had been honourably conducted

with weapons of constitutional warfare, and perhaps most respecting those by whom he had been most opposed. Those who dislike the present Government should follow the example. I have gone thus fully into the conduct and policy of the Administration, that those who make sweeping charges elsewhere, may, if they have any representatives here, make them before the House and in presence of the country, where they can be met, answered, or explained. This is the place in which a Government, if it does wrong, should expect open, manly opposition. For that we are prepared. If the House really disapproves of the Coalition—if it dislikes the principles avowed, or the mode in which the Administration has been conducted, let it record its decision, and then our course is plain. Until that is done, we shall go on temperately, and, I trust, wisely, endeavouring to rally round Lord Falkland men of all parties, by doing justice to all,—aiding him to obliterate party feelings by forgetting our own,—and proving, by his example, how easy it is, in Nova Scotia, to maintain the authority of the Queen in harmony with the feelings of the People.

[A three days' discussion followed the delivery of the above, at the end of which the subjoined resolution, moved by Gaius Lewis, Esq. and seconded by S. Chipman, Esq. was adopted, in committee of the whole House, by the overwhelming majority of 40 to 8 :—]

Resolved, As the opinion of the Committee, that the principles and policy of the present Administration, as explained by the members of Government, are satisfactory,—and, if adhered to, will entitle it to the approbation and support of the Legislature and People of Nova Scotia.

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